Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in April—August, 2002. A consumer goods show was also held in Kyrgyzstan in July, 2003.

Aid Projects: Humanitarian Assistance worth US$ 5 million was delivered to Tajikistan in August, 2002. 10 TATA SAFARI four wheel vehicles were gifted in October, 2002 for Global Mountain Summit held in Bishkek(Kyrgyzstan). Turkmen-Indian Industrial Centre at Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) funded by Government of India at a cost of Rs. 2.7 crores, was completed by Hindustan Machine Tools (1) and handed over to Turkmenistan in December, 2002.

Defence Cooperation: Bilateral relations in the Defence Sector have been further strengthened in the region.

Cultural: A Cultural Centre in our Mission in Tajikistan was inaugurated by EAM in January, 2003 during his visit to Tajikistan.

Civil Aviation: For the first time all CA States now have air links with India.

Joint Working Group to Combat Terrorism: India has signed Agreement to set up Joint Working Groups to Combat Terrorism with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

(c) Prospects for 2003-2004 include further political level visits, from/to some of the Central Asian Republics. Economic interactions i.e. setting up of Joint Ventures, projects under Government of India Credit Lines, cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals, hydro carbons, construction and IT Sector, are being explored. A Food Processing Plant for Kyrgyzstan and a fruit processing plant in Tajikistan are proposed to be set up under Government of India's aid programme. The establishment of an IT institute for higher learning in Kyrgyzstan, besides Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is also being planned. Cultural Exchange Programmes are being reviewed/finalized. Agreements with other CA States to set up Joint Working Group on Terrorism are also under active consideration.

Humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan

515. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is not allowing transit facilities to India to send humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan;

(b) whether Government propose to send assistance/material to Afghanistan via Iran's Bandar Abbas port;

(c) if so, how many days will it take to reach Afghanistan; and

(d) the nature of help India is sending to Afghanistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) Except for some vehicles, Pakistan has so far not allowed other Indian humanitarian assistance items destined for Afghanistan to transit through the India-Pakistan border. Indian humanitarian assistance continues to be sent through other commercially available channels and routes to Afghanistan. Government would continue to send assistance/material through such channels and routes including Bandar Abbas in which case it normally takes up to 4-6 weeks for the consignments to reach Afghanistan.

(d) India has provided extensive humanitarian project and financial assistance to Afghanistan. Government had announced a financial commitment of US$ 100 million for reconstruction of Afghanistan. Out of this grant, sum of US$ 10 million was transferred into the account of the Afghan government as budget subsidy in July 2002. Some of the major areas of our project assistance include the fields of Education, Health, Civil Aviation (3 aircrafts have been gifted), Public Transport (274 buses have been provided), culture and media, institution building (through training in various fields, so far nearly 500 Afghan officials have been trained at Indian institutions), information technology, security and rule of law, judiciary, banking, urban development and agriculture.

India had announced food assistance of 1 million tons of wheat to Afghanistan. A part of this assistance (85517 tons of wheat) has been converted into high protein biscuits (9526 tons) and has been sent to Afghanistan for its school feeding programme.

During the visit of President of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai to India in March this year, Prime Minister had announced a financial commitment of US$ 70 million, over and above the already available grant of US$ 100 million, for the construction of Zaranj-Delaram road. India and Afghanistan have also signed a Preferential Trading Agreement.